



Challenges for Local Government

The State’s budget problems are no longer trickling down to local government, but instead are resulting in a stream of significant reductions in program aid and market value credits once put in place by lawmakers to hold down property taxes and sustain important programs. Blue Earth County reduced its workforce by 8 percent at the close of last year, and is awaiting adjournment by the State Legislature in May which will determine the depth of additional cuts and service reductions, as well as the revenue necessary to comply with any new or continued mandates on counties.

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THE COMMUNICATOR

The Blue Earth County Communicator is published biannually to increase public awareness and involvement in county government.



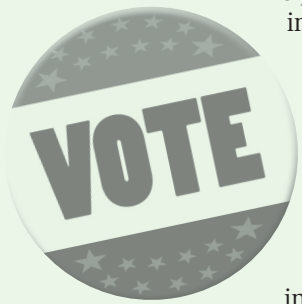
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Award-Winning Publication

 by the National Association of County Information Officers



The primary election in Minnesota has moved to the second Tuesday in August to provide for a 45-day absentee balloting period for overseas voters, including those serving in the military.

Having primary voting earlier also changes approximately 40 or more statutes, including the dates of candidate filing.

Important dates

- Candidate filing begins Tuesday, May 18 and closes at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, June 1. The two-day withdraw period ends at 5 p.m. on Thursday, June 3.
- Primary Election is Tuesday, August 10
- General Election is Tuesday, November 2

Election judges are needed. In order to serve, individuals must be eligible to vote in the State of Minnesota, affiliated with a major political party, able to read, write and speak English, and be trained and certified.

Interested in serving as an election judge? Contact Blue Earth County Elections at 507-304-4213. Please provide your name, address, phone number and party affiliation.

For additional information, please contact Blue Earth County Elections at 507-304-4340.

“Take 10” and Help Blue Earth County Get What it Needs for the Next 10 Years

In March 2010, more than 130 million addresses received a 2010 Census form by mail or hand delivery. The 2010 Census will document the changes in our nation since the last decennial census in 2000, and tell us how we’ve evolved as a country. Because census data affect how more than \$400 billion in federal funding is distributed to tribal, state and local governments, the census also will frame the future of our country and our community for the next 10 years.

During Census 2000, the mail participation rate was 72 percent as of the April 2000 cutoff. About \$85 million is saved for every one percent increase in mail participation. For these and many other reasons, we must work to encourage everyone’s participation in the census.

Here’s what you should know about the 2010 Census:

It’s easy. One of the shortest census forms in history, the 2010 Census form asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete. The individual in whose name the housing unit is rented or owned should complete the form on behalf of every person living there, both relatives and nonrelatives.

It’s important. Census data are used to reapportion seats in Congress and ensure proper district representation in state and local governments.

United States[®] Census 2010

Information from the census helps determine locations for childcare and senior centers, new roads, hospitals, schools and community centers.

It’s safe. By law, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot share respondents’ answers with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. All Census Bureau employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

Finally, the most efficient way to respond to the 2010 Census is to complete the form as soon as it arrives and return it in the postage-paid return envelope. Census workers will visit households that do not return forms to take the count in person. ■

For more information about the 2010 Census and the “Take 10” initiative, visit 2010census.gov. Additional census forms in multiple languages can be picked up at all Blue Earth County library locations.

Property Information Now Available 24/7

Two remote access subscription options are now available to the public which allows users to obtain Blue Earth County property information faster, more efficiently and at any time.

“Blue Earth County is excited to make property information more available to the public by working with Fidlar Technologies to provide two subscription options that allow users flexibility and the ability to obtain needed information at any time and from any location,” stated Director of Taxpayer Services Patty O’Connor.

The systems are designed to allow frequent users and businesses who access property information on a regular basis more convenience. This new technology helps save staff time for other functions while allowing users more freedom.

Fidlar Technologies offers two programs which include the Laredo and Tapestry systems. Laredo is designed for users who consistently search in a single county and offers per-minute plan charges through Blue Earth County. To become a Laredo subscriber, those interested can contact Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services at (507) 304-4251. Once registered and given a username and password, users can visit www.fidlar.com to download the software and search. Tapestry (the second option) is best suited for occasional users or those who want the freedom to search in all counties that use Fidlar Technologies. The Tapestry option is set up in a pay-as-you-go format and allows users access from any web browser. To get started with Tapestry visit www.landrecords.net.

For more information on Laredo and Tapestry subscriptions please contact Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services at (507) 304-4251.

Getting Citizens Involved: A “Hands-On” Civic Experience

By Jessica Beyer, Public Information Specialist

The Blue Earth County Citizens Academy offers a unique opportunity for citizens to get an inside perspective on how county government works and to become engaged through informative sessions. This free program is in its second year.

“The program was initiated to better inform residents about county government and services that are provided,” said Dennis McCoy, Blue Earth County Administrator. “An important aspect of the program is for citizens to have the opportunity to interact with elected officials and staff throughout various departments who work behind the scenes to help deliver essential services.”

Throughout the series of six interactive sessions, participants tour a number of County facilities for a hands-on learning experience.

They learn about administration, finance, the Sheriff’s office, probation, human services, environmental services, public works, library, elections, and taxpayer services.

The first session took place on March 16.

Graduates will receive special recognition at the May 11, 2010, County Board Meeting.

2010 Citizens Academy Participants

Lul Ahmed
Micah Degner
Clark Diel
Danielle Geistfeid
Jon Hedman
Ted Hottinger
Nasra Ibrahim
Michael Indorf
Gary Klinder
Becky Kunst
Jamie Kunst
Mandy Landkamer
Casey Lenort
Tim Pulis
Carie Robb
Terry Tacheny
Jane Tarjeson
Judy Vosbeek
Christi Wilking
Caroline Wood



Citizens Academy participants take part in a panel discussion with Blue Earth County Commissioners during the first session of the program held in mid-March at the Historic Courthouse.

First Half Real Estate Taxes Due May 17

The Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services Department reminds property owners that the first half of their 2010 property taxes are due on Monday, May 17, 2010. The Taxpayer Services office is located on the first floor of the Historic Courthouse, 204 S. Fifth Street, in Mankato. Payments postmarked on or before that date will be accepted without penalty. There are drop boxes located in the lobby of the downtown Hy-Vee Food Store, and near the entrance of Cub Foods on Madison Avenue, for use in making tax payments. Please include your payment stubs with your check.

Taxpayers can also make tax payments at the following banks in Blue Earth County; Community Bank in Vernon Center, MinnStar Bank in Lake Crystal and Good Thunder, Peoples State Bank in Madison Lake, Pioneer Bank in Mapleton, St. Clair State Bank in St. Clair and US Bank in Amboy. If you wish to pay your taxes at these banks, please take your tax statements with you, so bank personnel can confirm the correct amount and better assist you.

Board Packets Now Available Online

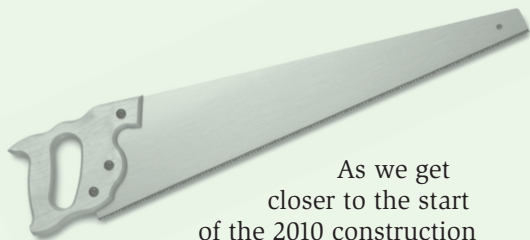
Citizens now have an easier way to stay informed with access to current Blue Earth County Board packets online. Traditionally, only Board meeting schedules, agendas and minutes were posted to the Blue Earth County website. With the start of the new year, all paper documents within a Board packet can be accessed by the public anywhere or at any time. For more information or to check out the addition of new information to the Blue Earth County website, visit www.co.blue-earth.mn.us. Visitors can access the information from a quick link on the website homepage or click through Departments to the Board of Commissioners page.



When do I need a Building Permit?



PUBLIC WORKS



As we get closer to the start of the 2010 construction season, property owners and contractors are reminded to check with the County Planning and Zoning office to see what permits are needed. Generally, all proposed construction greater than 120 square feet requires a construction permit. Smaller projects, although not required to obtain a permit, must meet all of the required setbacks to property lines, road right-of-ways, water features, etc.

There are a number of restrictions that apply to nonconforming lots and for properties located within shoreland, i.e. property within 1,000 feet of a lake or 300 feet of a protected stream or river. To cover all of the restrictions that may apply, it is best to call environmental services to get answers for a specific property.

Property owners with lakeshore are also reminded that permits are also required for any shoreland alteration project. Depending on the size of the project, these permits may require a conditional use permit.

To find out more information about obtaining a building permit and the permit requirements for rural unincorporated areas of Blue Earth County, please contact the Environmental Services Office at 507-304-4381.

County Buildings Earn ENERGY STAR Award

Two Blue Earth County facilities have been recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for demonstrating superior energy performance during 2009. Both the Historic Courthouse, which is more than 120 years old, and the Government Center earned the award by scoring in the top 25 percent based on the EPA's National Energy Performance Rating System. The Historic Courthouse first earned the award in 2006 and the Government Center in 2007. The EPA has worked with businesses and organizations for more than a decade to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through strategic energy management practices. To learn more, visit www.energystar.gov.

New Minneopa Trail

By Alan Forsberg, County Engineer and Public Works Director

The Blue Earth County Board awarded a contract to Southern Minnesota Construction in September to construct a trail from Sibley Park in Mankato to Minneopa Park. Construction started last fall with installation of a tunnel under McCauley Street. Construction will resume this spring with completion this fall. Funding sources include Federal Transportation Enhancement, Blue Earth County, MnDNR and MnDOT.

The 3.5-mile-long project will be an independent trail except for the last one-half mile section, which will be on paved CSAH 69 shoulders due to archeological, historic and cost considerations.

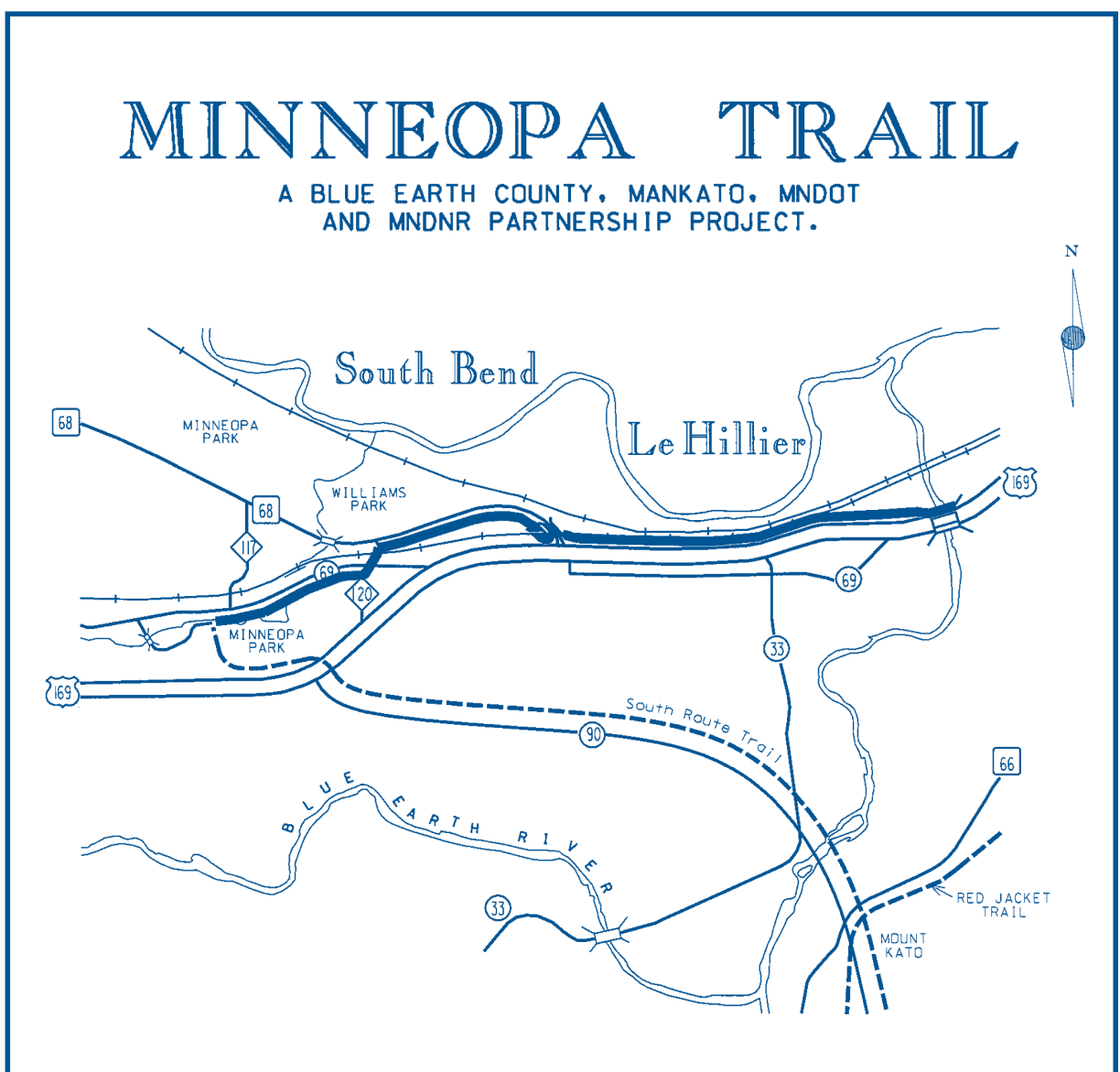
This trail has been a vision of area planners for several years. The trail not only provides a connection between two parks of regional significance, Sibley and Minneopa parks, but

also fills a missing link in the regional trail system which includes the Minnesota River Trail, recently constructed by Mankato, the State's Sakatah Trail, and the County's CSAH 90 Trail and Red Jacket Trail.

Project planners had to overcome several challenging hurdles, including rugged terrain, rock excavation, and finding safe solutions for a number of road and railroad crossings.

Features of the new Minneopa Trail include a tunnel on the street leading to Sibley Park; bridge under TH 68; and bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad.

A ribbon cutting ceremony and organized bicycle ride is being planned for this fall. ■



For more information please contact the Blue Earth County Highway Department at (507) 304-4025.



CSAH 12 Extension / Hwy. 14 Interchange Project Update

By Alan Forsberg, County Engineer and Public Works Director

The County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 12 extension/Hwy. 14 interchange project is underway with construction taking place on the first of four stages. Stage one includes construction of a bridge over the DM&E railroad and Sakatah Trail and is scheduled to be completed in July. Bids were opened for stage two, the roadway from the Mankato Regional Airport south to CSAH 3 and construction will begin this summer. Stages three

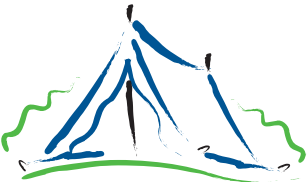


and four which include the interchange with Hwy. 14 and roadway from CSAH 3 to CSAH 17, are scheduled for 2011 and 2012, depending on funding.

The overall cost is \$20 million and the project has been accelerated by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding and special Federal funds. The project was identified as part of the Mankato Area Transportation and Planning Study (MATAPS), which is a regional planning study. Project partners include Blue Earth County, MnDot and the City of Mankato. When completed, the project will include a new north/south road from the Mankato Regional Airport to CSAH 17/Madison Avenue, with a separated grade interchange at Hwy. 14. The new road will include a trail along its entire length with connection to the Sakatah Trail. The purpose of the project is to relieve traffic congestion on Hwy. 22, Hwy. 14 and the Adams Street area, improve safety and encourage economic development. ■

For more information please contact the Blue Earth County Highway Department at (507) 304-4025.

Summer Activities At Blue Earth County Parks!

PARKS	ACTIVITIES																			
	Tent Camping Sites	Mobile Camping Sites	Electrical Hook-ups	Bathhouse	Boat/Canoe Launch	Canoe Rental	Drinking Water	Dump Station	Fire Rings/Grills	Fishing	Fishing Dock	Horseshoe Pits	Interpretive Center/Log Cabin	Nature Trail	Paddleboat Rental	Picnic Shelters	Picnic Tables	Playground	Primitive Restrooms	Resident caretakers
BRAY (102.3 ACRES)	10	33	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
DALY (92.41 ACRES)	15	71	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
DUCK LAKE (31.66 ACRES)				•	•	•	•		•	•					•	•	•	•	•	•
LAKE GEORGE (4.2 ACRES)					•				•	•	•					•				•
RAPIDAN (38.69 ACRES)	20				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
RED JACKET TRAIL PARK (4 ACRES)					•	•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•				
WILLIAMS NATURE CENTER (65 ACRES)							•						•	•					•	
INDIAN LAKE (120 ACRES)													•	•		•	•			
SCHIMEK (30 ACRES)									•	•				•		•	•			
WILDWOOD (28 ACRES)										•										
EAGLE LAKE (1 ACRE)					•					•								•		
LONE PINE (1.4 ACRES)					•					•										
HUNGRY HOLLOW STOP (4.2 ACRES)					•				•							•				
WATONWAN STOP (7ACRES)					•				•	•					•	•				

CAMPING RESERVATIONS: Camping reservation systems are available at Bray and Daly Parks. Reservations are taken by phone or in person at the park for which the reservation is requested. Park personnel will take reservations from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. A deposit is required to hold each camping site.

Daly Park:
11056 571st Lane
Mapleton, MN 56065
507-524-3000

Bray Park:
2214 Oriole Rd.
Madison Lake, MN 56063
507-243-3885



Mark Your Calendar for Summer Events at Blue Earth County Parks!

Blue Earth River Paddle Saturday, June 12

The Watershed Alliance along with other partners including Clean Up the River Environment and Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University Mankato will be hosting a Blue Earth River Paddle on June 12, 2010 (in case of bad weather the event will be held the following Saturday on June 19). The public is invited out to the Rapidan Dam County Park to participate in a diverse selection of activities including:

- A Blue Earth River Paddle starting at 10 a.m. from the Rapidan County Park to the new Fort Le Hillier Canoe Landing at County Road 90 for just over 9 miles
- Award ceremonies
- Music
- Information booths and displays
- Canoe and kayak rental
- Kids’ games
- Fishing contest
- And much more!

Rapidan Dam Centennial Saturday, August 14

Celebrate 100 years of the Rapidan Dam with a fishing contest, music, entertainment, arts & crafts, historical exhibits, hog roast, 1919 Root Beer and Dam Store specials.

Help Feed Blue Earth County

Take part in the Letter Carriers’ Food Drive throughout Blue Earth County

Saturday, May 8, 2010

Help stamp out hunger by putting non-perishable food donations in a bag by your mailbox or leave it at your local post office. Letter carriers will deliver it to a local food bank.



For more information contact your local post office.



New and Improved Home Sharps Disposal Program Announced

- New location
- New convenience
- New hours

Blue Earth County and the Mankato Hy-Vee - Downtown Pharmacy at 410 S. Riverfront Drive are teaming up to offer a new and convenient way to safely and affordably dispose of needles, syringes and lancets, known as “sharps.”



As of March 1, 2010, sharps will be accepted for disposal during all hours the Hy-Vee - Downtown Pharmacy is open. The cost is \$3 per container.

Last year, Blue Earth County Environmental Services and Community Health offered sharps disposal one day, every fourth week.

“We were delighted when Hy-Vee asked about continuing the program this year. With the service being offered every day, its more convenient and affordable to everyone,” stated Jean Lundquist with Blue Earth County Environmental Services.

Acceptable sharps containers include special store-purchased containers or a heavy plastic jug with a screw-on cap such as a laundry detergent container. Coffee cans shouldn’t be used, as they pop open when bent. Loose sharps or improperly contained sharps will not be accepted.

Those with needles used for people, pets or livestock are encouraged to take advantage of this program.

For more information, please contact the Mankato Hy-Vee - Downtown Pharmacy at (507) 345-5091 or Jean Lundquist with Blue Earth County Environmental Services at (507) 304-4381.

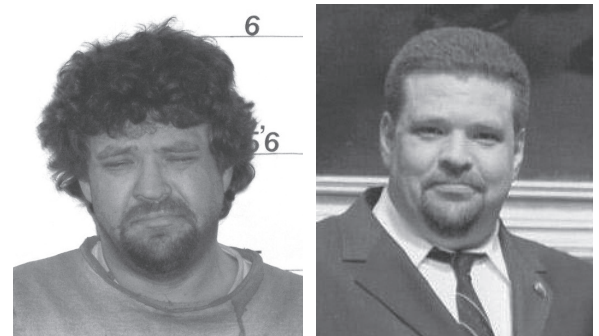
Drug Court: Transforming Lives

Drug Court is a special court that hears selected cases involving nonviolent, substance-abusing offenders (both drugs and alcohol). Drug Court programs are rigorous, requiring intensive supervision including frequent drug testing and appearances before the judge, along with a long-term regimen of treatment and recovery services. This level of supervision allows the program to actively support the recovery process and react swiftly.

Scott Southwick, a recent graduate of the Blue Earth County Drug Court Program, credits his time in the program as a life-changing opportunity. Southwick completed the program in 2008 after 22 months.

“I was doing well in life and had a great job. Without intention, my life deteriorated and I lost everything to my addiction. When I entered Drug Court I was at rock bottom. Drug Court provided me with an alternative option to self-destruction and brought me back in touch with my family, community and life. I will graduate in May with my degree in Architectural Drafting

from South Central College and I’m considering continuing my education to get a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Drug Court brings unquantifiable results to communities and reaches far beyond helping program participants get clean. I have seen positive impacts on the lives of others outside of the program,” said Southwick.



Scott Southwick is proud of the transformation he has made in his life through participation in the Blue Earth County Drug Court Program.

Blue Earth County One of Seven to be Designated StormReady

By Brenda Olmscheid, Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office

Officials from the National Weather Service recognized Blue Earth County as a certified “StormReady” community at the April 6 Blue Earth County Board meeting. Among Minnesota’s 87 counties, Blue Earth County is one of seven to attain this designation.

The StormReady program, started in 1999 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, helps arm communities with the communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property before and during an event. StormReady helps community leaders and emergency managers strengthen local safety programs. StormReady communities are better prepared to save lives from the onslaught of severe weather through advance planning, education and awareness. No community is storm proof, but StormReady can help communities save lives.

Each year, Americans cope with an average of 10,000 thunderstorms, 5,000 floods and 1,000 tornadoes. Nearly 90 percent of all presidentially-declared disasters are weather related, leading to an estimated 500 deaths per year and nearly \$14 billion in damage.

Working together with the National Weather Service, Blue Earth County has developed a highly effective and proactive hazardous weather action plan. As part of the severe weather notification process, there are multiple methods in place to provide warnings in the event of approaching hazardous weather. To learn more about the National Weather Service and StormReady visit www.nws.noaa.gov. ■



Todd Krause, Warning Coordination Meteorologist from the National Weather Service presents Blue Earth County Board Chair Will Purvis (far left) and the Emergency Management team with StormReady signage at the April 6 Board of Commissioners meeting.



Adults Can Help Celebrate Earth Day By Disposing of Unwanted Pharmaceuticals Properly

By Jean Lundquist, Waste & Recycling Specialist

Earth Day in Blue Earth County will be celebrated with two free collections for old, expired and unwanted medications. After collection, all medications will be disposed of properly in a special commercial incinerator.

The first collection for these pharmaceuticals will be held on Earth Day, Thursday, April 22, and again a week later on Thursday, April 29. Both events will be held from noon until 6 p.m. at the new Blue Earth County Justice Center. Signs will be posted at the entrance directing people to the back of the building.

Blue Earth County Environmental Services, Community Health and the Sheriff's Department are all involved in the collection, along with ISJ-Mayo Health System. With proper disposal, medications are kept out of the environment where they can contaminate drinking water. The program also ensures that unwanted medications are kept out of the hands of young people and others

who could abuse them, and off the street away from criminal activity.

Medications should never be flushed or buried, even though that was the suggested disposal method not that long ago.

These collections are a chance to clean out medicine cabinets, and be assured of safe and proper disposal. All medications should be kept in the original container so they can be sorted according to type. No questions will be asked and there are no forms to fill out. Just bring your old medicines and pharmaceuticals to one of the events.

Both events are free and available to area businesses and residents. ■



For more information call the 24-Hour Waste and Recycling Hotline at 507-304-4242.

Manure Application Reminder

By Sara Isebrand, Land Use Specialist

Those applying manure to fields this spring are asked to use extreme caution. With the amount of snow that our area received this winter, the application of manure could be difficult. Proper application of manure is something to be reminded of no matter what the season. It is a requirement that manure is applied to fields that have less than or equal to a four percent slope. This general rule will help control runoff; however, it is always important to be cautious of where manure may pond or run off, even if fields meet the slope requirement. Application amounts must be carefully monitored.

Due to the wet spring season, it's important to be reminded of current regulations. Please keep in mind the setbacks and use good judgment. Inadequate setback for manure application provides a direct source for manure-contaminated runoff to reach open tile intakes, streams, rivers and other open water features.

For more information, contact Sara Isebrand, Blue Earth County Land Use Specialist, at 507-304-4339.



Blue Earth County Household Hazardous Waste Facility Open for the Season

The Blue Earth County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility and Product Reuse Center is open for the season from now until the end of October on every Tuesday from noon to 6 p.m., plus the second Saturday of each month from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The facility is located at 651 Summit Avenue in Mankato.

A few changes will be noticed at the facility in 2010. The entrance to the Product Reuse Center has been moved to the side of the building, allowing users to avoid traffic from vehicles dropping materials off.

The HHW Facility accepts hazardous materials from residential users in Blue Earth County and three surrounding counties, including Nicollet, Sibley and LeSueur free of charge. Other programs are available for farmers and some businesses. Household material that is taken in is then checked for quality. Products that are deemed still usable are placed on shelves in the Product Reuse Center, where they are available to residents to take at no charge.

In addition to the HHW Facility and Product Reuse Center offering valuable services to area residents at no cost, it also saves taxpayers money. Throughout the 2009 HHW season, a total of 43,590 pounds of good, useable materials were cycled through the Product Reuse Center for residents to use at no cost. Seventy percent of these materials were paints and because the products were reused by others, disposal costs were also saved. In 2009, Blue Earth County taxpayers saved over \$22,000 in disposal costs.

For directions or more information about the Household Hazardous Waste Facility, call the 24-hour waste and recycling hotline at (507) 304-4242.

Energy Meters
Available for Checkout
Starting April 17



LIBRARY SERVICES

A new program sponsored by Xcel Energy and the Envision 2020 Conservation Energy Task Force kicks-off April 17 at the Blue Earth County Library Earth Day Celebration. The program allows adult library card holders to check out portable energy meters to help assess home or business electricity use. The meters are easy to use and can be plugged into any standard 120-volt electric appliance to measure voltage, electricity cost and electric consumption. The meters are packaged in a kit that also contains information booklets and a USB cord to upload data to a computer. This program is part of an ongoing effort to educate the public on the importance of conserving energy and illustrate potential savings on monthly electricity costs.



Celebrate Earth Day at the Library!

**Saturday, April 17
10 a.m. to Noon**

**Fun for Kids and Families
Activities
Games
Craft Projects**

- Highlights include sand tube necklaces, create a bug, CD suncatchers, lava tubes, bug bands, facepainting, seed planting, bowling for the environment, fishing pond game
- Don't miss special visitor Smokey Bear
- Lessons on Severe Weather from Mitch Keegan with KEYC and Brenda Olmscheid with Blue Earth County Emergency Management

2010 Bookmark Contest

By Tim Hayes, Library Director

Students from throughout Blue Earth County illustrated an abundance of artistic talent by providing more than 1,600 entries for the Blue Earth County Library 2010 Bookmark Contest. Area students, ages preschool through 12th grade, entered the contest sponsored by Paragon Printing and Twin Rivers Center for the Arts. For the first time, local artists held a workshop in February to encourage youth to participate by offering helpful advice and the use of art supplies. An award ceremony recognized winners

on March 27 at the library auditorium in Mankato. First-place designs were professionally printed and distributed at all Blue Earth County libraries including the Mapleton Public Library and the Lake Crystal Public Library. ■



Emma Bloedel

2010 Bookmark Contest Winners

Preschool to Kindergarten

Maggie Hanel – First Place
Age 6, Kindergarten, Immanuel Lutheran School

Alex Emery – Second Place
Age 4, Pre-school, Montessori Learning Center

Avery Lowrie – Third Place
Age 5, Pre-school, 4 Kids ECFE

Emma Winters – Third Place
Age 6, Kindergarten, Lake Crystal Welcome Memorial Elementary

1st to 2nd Grade

Ellie Wilde – First Place
Age 7, 2nd Grade, Maple River West

Kelsey Goettl – Second Place
Age 8, 2nd Grade, Monroe Elementary

Kolin Baier – Third Place
Age 8, 2nd Grade, Kennedy Elementary

3rd to 5th Grade

Laynie Kubista – First Place
Age 11, 5th Grade, Loyola Catholic School

Olivia Madson – Second Place
Age 10, 5th Grade, Monroe Elementary

Reid Hansen – Second Place
Age 10, 5rd Grade, Maple River West Elementary

Claire Krenik – Third Place
Age 11, 5th Grade, Eagle Lake Elementary

6th to 8th Grade

Emma Bloedel – First Place
Age 11, 6th Grade, Mount Olive Lutheran School

Logan Peterson – First Place
Age 13, 7th Grade, Mankato East Jr. High

Andrew Murray –
Second Place
Age 14, 8th Grade,
Loyola Catholic
School

Madison Jones –
Third Place
Age 11, 6th
Grade, Maple
River Middle School

Riona Ryan – Third Place
Age 13, 7th Grade, Dakota Meadows
Middle School

9th to 12th Grade

Ciara Sandborg – First Place
Age 16, 11th Grade, Maple River High School

Ashley Brunton – First Place
Age 15, 9th Grade, Mankato West

Miranda Smith – First Place
Age 15, 9th Grade, Mankato East

Lisa Schroer – Second Place
Age 16, 12th Grade, Maple River High School

Jing Wang –Second Place
Age 15, 10th Grade, Mankato West

Sreen Bidwell –Third Place
Age 16, 10th Grade, Mankato West

Anne Maurer – Third Place
Age 15, 9th Grade, Mankato West

Summer Reading Program begins in June

By Jennifer Cassman, Library Specialist



Summer Reading 2010, “Make a Splash...Read,” kicks off on Monday, June 7, at Blue Earth County libraries in Mankato, Mapleton and Lake Crystal. Each year the program aims at helping children maintain or improve their reading levels

during the summer months. Unique weekly programs and fun prizes get kids involved and keep reading skills strong. A special thank you goes out to all sponsors, including the program’s primary sponsor Taylor Corporation and second largest contributor Friends of the Deep Valley Library. All contributions great and small are appreciated and ensure that quality educational programs continue for youth in our area. ■

For more regarding the summer reading program, contact Jennifer Cassman at (507) 304-4020.

Sign-up begins on June 7th Programs begin on June 11th

NEW TWISTS ON FAVORITE PROGRAMS

Magician Bob Kann
Mr. Twister’s Magical Balloon Show
Peter Bloedel
MoonDog Games
Airplane Rides
Minnesota Science Museum
MN Zoomobile
Reptile and Amphibian Discovery Zoo
U of M Raptor Center
And much, much more!!

**Don’t miss programs and prizes this
summer at the Blue Earth County Library!**

Upcoming Library Events

Made possible through grants approved from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and Traverse des Sioux Library System.

Raptor Center presents “Raptors in Minnesota”

Tuesday, April 20 – 6 to 7 p.m.
Four live birds of prey including a bald eagle will be part of this special learning experience for kids of all ages.

Dead Sea Scrolls Field Trip

Saturday, May 8
50 adults will be able to take part in a field trip to the Science Museum in St. Paul to view the 2,000-year-old exhibit and see the corresponding omnifilm “Arabia.”

Explore Bright Ideas

Tuesday, May 11 – 6 p.m.
The Science Museum will travel to the Blue Earth County Library in Mankato for an interactive program geared for the whole family.

For more information on any of the upcoming events contact the Blue Earth County Library at (507) 304-4001.

Discover Blue Earth County 4-H!

Youth across Blue Earth County are seeing their potential and discovering their abilities as they take part in all that 4-H has to offer. Blue Earth County youth and their families are invited to discover the exciting things happening in 4-H today. There are 10 community-based 4-H clubs in the communities of Janesville, St. Clair, Mankato, Amboy, Lake Crystal, Garden City, Minnesota Lake, Mapleton, Good Thunder and Vernon Center.

What is 4-H? 4-H is a youth organization open to all youth, kindergarten through one year past high school, whether they live in the city or in the country. Blue Earth County 4-H welcomes boys and girls from all backgrounds. 4-H uses fun, hands-on activities where youth learn by doing. There are more than 100 projects to explore, such as photography, foods, wood working, leadership, art, robotics, fashion, GPS or animals of all kinds from guinea pigs to dogs and cats to horses, pigs and cows. Youth don’t even have to own an animal or live on a farm to sign up. There is a project for almost every interest.

4-H members in communities throughout Blue Earth County are participating in service projects, leadership development, experiential learning, projects, and positive-out-of-school time through the 4-H Program. Members take part in many activities throughout the year, including: day camps, 4-H adventures, Winterfest, sledding parties, haunted houses, bowling nights, skiing, bingo, Christmas caroling, picnics in the park, and so much more! Clubs throughout Blue Earth County meet at various times and usually meet monthly.

4-H teaches participants more than how to take good photographs or care for an animal. In 4-H, youth learn how to work with others, solve problems, speak

in public, be a leader, take on responsibility and enjoy life. These skills can be used over and over again to help you be successful in school and life.

Looking for a family activity with something for every child? 4-H is for you! “There are many ways to get involved in 4-H in Blue Earth County,” says Amanda Sommers, 4-H Program Coordinator. “Nervous about jumping right in? Try out 4-H by taking part in a 4-H Adventure, first! The 4-H Adventure program is open to all youth in Blue Earth County in grades K-5. Adventures are mini blasts of educational fun offered throughout the year to learn something in just a few short hours.”

Upcoming adventures will be held at the Courthouse in Mankato on April 19th from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., where we’ll be learning all about the mystery of puppets and on May 17th from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., where we’ll take on the challenge of creating our own ice cream, while learning the scientific reaction that occurs to make it work. Pre-registration is required, so please call (507) 304-4325 or email eppe0018@umn.edu to get signed up.

Interested in learning more about 4-H? Check out our website to learn more about the Blue Earth County 4-H Program and what we are up to: <http://blueearthcounty4h.blogspot.com> or www.extension.umn.edu. Interested in joining 4-H? Joining a Blue Earth County 4-H club is easy! Contact the Blue Earth County Extension Office at (507) 304-4325 for more information. See your potential with 4-H and GET GREEN!

For more information, contact Amanda Sommers, Blue Earth County 4-H Program Coordinator at (507) 304-4325 or eppe0018@umn.edu



Prescription Discount Card Program



HUMAN SERVICES

The National Association of Counties Prescription Discount Card Program was designed for uninsured and underinsured county residents. Through a partnership with Caremark, this simple discount card can save an average of 23 percent off the full retail cost of prescription medication. Here are the key factors that make it a great program:

- It is easy to participate. There are no enrollment fees, no forms to fill out, no age or income requirements, and no medical condition restrictions. The entire family is covered with just one card and virtually all commonly prescribed medicine is covered;



Simply present your card at a participating retail pharmacy and save an average of 23 percent on your prescription medicine

- There are no costs. There is no cost to the county, county taxpayers, or consumers to participate. Caremark negotiates the discounts directly with participating pharmacies. Neither NACo nor the participating counties receive any revenue from the program;
- Everyone is eligible. The discount cards are provided free to residents living in Blue Earth County and other participating counties. A national network of more than 59,000 retail pharmacies honor the card;
- Consumers always receive the lowest retail price. On occasion, pharmacies will price a particular medication lower than the discount rate available with the NACo card. If that occurs, consumers will receive the lower price. Either way, consumers will always receive the best price available.

To obtain a card or to learn more information contact Blue Earth County Human Services at (507) 304-4335.

Statewide Health Improvement Program

By Kelley Haeder, Community Health Supervisor

Over 30,000 households in 19 counties in Southwest and South Central Minnesota will receive the 2010 Adult Health Survey this April. This regional effort is sponsored by the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) and all local public health providers in the region. Wilder Research, based in St. Paul, will be conducting the survey on behalf of these organizations. The survey asks questions about resident nutrition, physical activity and tobacco use. Data from this survey will be used to assess the current health status of residents, identify barriers to good nutrition and physical activity. This survey will allow public health agencies to establish health promotion priorities on a local and regional level.

Households receiving the survey were chosen randomly. All of the information gathered from individuals will be confidential. County residents responses will be combined into a summary report. It is very important to complete and return the survey so that public health and health care professionals can get a clear picture of the health care needs of this region.



Adult Health Survey reports will be available in July of this year from Blue Earth County Community Health.

The goal of the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) is to help Minnesotans live longer, healthier, better lives by preventing risk factors that lead to chronic disease. The main focus is reducing obesity and tobacco use and exposure. SHIP uses evidence-based strategies to create change in policies, environments, and systems to support healthy behaviors.

SHIP is an integral component of an overall health care reform initiative passed during the 2008 Legislative session. Minnesota's health reforms aim to simultaneously improve the health of Minnesotans, enhance the patient experience and contain the spiraling cost of health care in our state.

For more information contact Blue Earth County Community Health at (507) 304-4319.

Federal WIC Program

The WIC (Women, Infants & Children Supplemental Nutrition) Program might be for you or someone you know. Pregnant women, families with an infant or young children who are having trouble making ends meet, or those who would enjoy some nutrition tips and healthy food can come to WIC. WIC, a federally funded program, provides nutrition education, referrals for health care, and vouchers for healthy foods like milk, cereal, eggs, beans, peanut butter, whole grain bread, vegetables and fruit. WIC encourages breastfeeding and checks iron levels. Many times anemia (low iron in the blood) is caught early so the problem can be solved. If anyone in a family qualifies for Medical Assistance, Head Start, Food Stamps, free or reduced lunches at school they can use WIC services. Income guidelines are listed below:

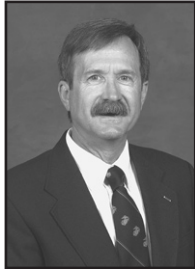
Household size (pregnant women count as 2)	WIC Basic Income Guidelines 185 percent of FPG (Federal Poverty Guidelines)		
	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
1	20,036	1,670	386
2	26,955	2,247	519
3	33,874	2,823	652
4	40,793	3,400	785
5	47,712	3,976	918
6	54,631	4,553	1051
Each additional member add	6,919	577	134

At WIC we truly care for children and their families and want to help them to be healthy and to feel respected. To find out if you qualify or to make an appointment, call 507-304-4163. We are located at 512 E. Mulberry St. (the corner of North 5th and Mulberry), Mankato.

SERVING YOU

**Drew Campbell**

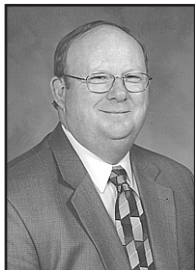
District 1 Commissioner
P. O. Box 1283
Mankato, MN 56002-1283
387-2408 (H) / 304-4282 (O)
drew.campbell@co.blue-earth.mn.us

**Tom McLaughlin**

District 2 Commissioner
344 Inverness Drive
Mankato, MN 56001
388-7647 (H) / 304-4283 (O)
tc_mclaughlin@hotmail.com

**Mark Piepho**

District 3 Commissioner
8 Skyline Drive
Mankato, MN 56001
345-4380 (H) / 304-4368 (O)
mark.piepho@co.blue-earth.mn.us

**Will Purvis,
Chair**

District 4 Commissioner
52298 140th Lane
Vernon Center, MN 56090
549-3420 (H) / 317-5465 (C)
will.purvis@co.blue-earth.mn.us

**Kip Bruender,
Vice Chair**

District 5 Commissioner
204 Joan Lane
Eagle Lake, MN 56024
257-2116 (H) / 382-2440 (C)
kip.bruender@co.blue-earth.mn.us

**Brad Peterson, Sheriff**

Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4800
brad.peterson@co.blue-earth.mn.us

**Ross Arneson,
County Attorney**

Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4600

**Dennis McCoy,
County Administrator**

Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. Fifth St.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4235
dennis.mccoy@co.blue-earth.mn.us

Board Information

The Blue Earth County Board generally meets every other Tuesday in the Boardroom at the Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse, 204 South Fifth Street, Mankato. For specific dates and times visit:

www.co.blue-earth.mn.us/board/schedule.php

Citizens who wish to address the Board of Commissioners at a meeting must contact the County Administrator at 304-4284 before noon Thursday preceding the Board meeting. This is needed to manage the Board's schedule. The Board will not take action at the time of the presentation, but will direct County staff to respond appropriately to issues raised by citizens.

Write Now!

Write & Tell Us What You Think.

The Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners and other officials are committed to providing quality service to our residents. Responding to your concerns and needs is a priority.

Please fill out the information below and leave it with a receptionist at any County office, or mail it at your convenience to:

Blue Earth County Public Information

P.O. Box 8608
Mankato, MN 56002-8608
or e-mail info@co.blue-earth.mn.us

With which County department did you have contact?

Please Evaluate: **Excellent** **Good** **Poor**

Courtesy of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timeliness of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value of service provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I would like County officials to know:

I have a suggestion:

If you want us to respond to your comments:

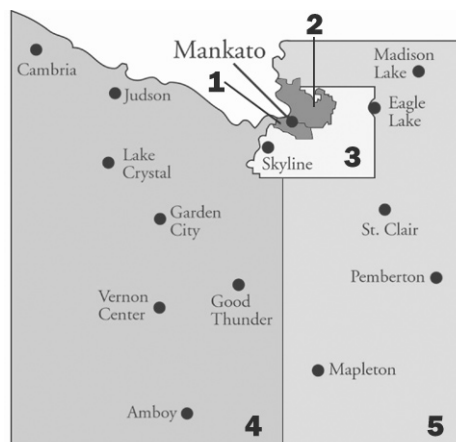
Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

**Thank you for your feedback.
We appreciate your comments so
we can serve you better!**

Blue Earth County COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS



SERVICE DIRECTORY



Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd., Mankato



Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. Fifth St., Mankato



County Government Center
410 S. Fifth St., Mankato

Probation
1st Floor 304-4750

Restitution/Restorative justice
Adult & juvenile probation, Parole, Supervised release and Diversion
Pre-trial services/Bail evaluation
Community work service programs

County Sheriff /Emergency Services

1st Floor 304-4800

Burning Permits
Civil Process Office
Request a Crime Report
Report a Crime

5th Judicial District Court

2nd Floor 304-4650

Traffic tickets
Small claims court
Civil and criminal court

County Attorney

2nd Floor 304-4600



Public Works Department
35 Map Dr., Mankato

Roads & Bridges 304-4025

Road/bridge construction & inspection
Permits: Driveway, overweight/size loads, utility
Culvert Sales
Swing-away Mailbox Mounts
Calcium chloride for dust control
Park & Trail System 304-4025
Camping & shelter reservations
Firewood sales & boat rental
Agricultural Inspection 304-4025
Weed control & seed testing

Physical Plant/Safety
Lower Level 304-4249

Finance

Lower Level 304-4182

Taxpayer Services – Property Information/Passports

1st Floor 304-4251

Property assessment & tax collection
Abstracts/Certificates for registered land
Mapping
Ditch Management
Passports

Administration

2nd Floor

Administration 304-4284
Human Resources 304-4288
Public Information 304-4491

U of M Extension

3rd Floor 304-4325

Agriculture 304-4143
4-H/youth development 304-4142
Horticulture 304-4146
Misc. Program Areas 304-4326
Nutrition Education Program 304-4141



Blue Earth County Library
100 E. Main St., Mankato

General Services 304-4001
Children's Services 304-4020
Adult & Reference Services 304-4022
Fines & Renewals 304-4010
Meeting Room Reservations 304-4002
Bookmobile 304-4004
Administration 304-4002

Taxpayer Services – License Center/Elections
Lower Level 304-4340

Driver's licenses
Motor vehicle/Boat registration
Fishing/Hunting licenses
Birth/Death certificates
Marriage licenses
Voter registration/Absentee ballots
Filing of notaries

Veterans Services

Lower Level 304-4246

Federal & State benefits
Transportation to VA Hospital

Information Technology

Lower Level 304-4204

Human Services

1st/2nd/3rd Floors

Financial Assistance 304-4335
Social Services 304-4319
Community Health 304-4319
Mental Health Center 304-4319
Child Support 304-4166

Environmental Services

3rd Floor 304-4381

Planning & Zoning
Building & Feedlot Permits
Shorelands/Flood plains
Water wells/Septic systems/Wetlands
Recycling Center/Compost Site/Landfill
Household Hazardous Waste Center
911/Rural Addressing

Serving Citizens Through County Government

Other County Facilities/Numbers

Household Hazardous Waste Facility
651 Summit Ave., Mankato, 304-4242

Ponderosa Landfill
20028 Gooseberry Lane, Mankato, 625-7301

Recycling Center
741 Waseca Ave., LeHillier, 345-4255

24-Hour Waste and Recycling Hotline, 304-4242
County TTY/TDD (Hearing Impaired), 304-4399



**BLUE EARTH
COUNTY**

visit us online:
www.co.blue-earth.mn.us